

CHAMPAIGN (III.)

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Responsibility for Cuba

WITH the anti - Castro invasion of Cuba apparently at an end, and the rebel movement at least temporarily in eclipse, second-guessers are out in full force, and the consensus seems to be that the United States has blundered badly.

There has been a continuing dearth of information; it is now beginning to flow, although Americans may never know the full story. There is reason to fear that the full story, if and when made known, might have a worse effect than the U-2 flight over Russia, if it has not already.

Many reasons are assigned for what must be admitted to be the U. S. blunder in Cuba. One is that the invasion was not coordinated with the underground movements inside Cuba. Another is that intelligence sources overestimated Cuban desire and capacity to rise up against Castro's well - equipped army and militia. Yet another is that it was simply a case of too little, too late. Some may argue, too, that we had no moral right to intervene in Cuba.

Such Washington pundits as James Reston of the New York Times and Richard Wilson of the Cowles publications have written articles freely alluding to the U. S. intervention in the lamentable Cuban invasion and the responsibility of President Kennedy himself for the decision to give backing to the Cuban rebels.

One spokesman of the Kennedy administration threw in the entirely gratuitous remark that the whole invasion had first been conceived (but never executed) by the Eisenhower administration. This undoubtedly was the case, but the responsibility for what happened in Cuba last

week rests upon the man now in the White House.

To his credit, he is shouldering the full responsibility, blaming nobody else. He received conflicting advice from his subordinates and had to make the best decision he could. If, indeed, Mr. Kennedy has made a wrong decision on Cuba, he is wise enough to know the buck stops on his desk.

However, an investigation of intelligence and guerrilla warfare—how to wage it and counter it—has been promised, to be conducted by Attorney General Robert Kennedy and former Army Chief of Staff Maxwell Taylor. The implication is strong that the Central Intelligence Agency, which apparently also was taken by surprise in the Algerian coup—will be the chief target of the probe. Many Americans will find it disturbing that the President finds it necessary to have a formal look-see into his highest intelligence agency, with whose operations he must be presumed to be fully acquainted.

Nevertheless, the duty of Americans is clear—to close ranks behind the President, as responsible Republican leaders already give the appearance of doing in their conferences with Mr. Kennedy. Presidents elected by both political parties must share responsibility for the disrepair of our hemispheric fences and the monumental failure of U. S. foreign policy from the beginning to assess accurately and deal accordingly with Castro Cuba. The months ahead are going to be difficult ones for the United States in the Western Hemisphere; narrow partisanship will do nothing to lessen the difficulty.